

REMARKS

The Examiner has rejected Claims 2-5, and 8-15 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), based on the contention that they are anticipated by Japanese Patent No. JP-10-214782, issued to Shinji et al (Shinji '782) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,025,284, issued to Komoriya et al (Komoriya '284). Additionally, the Examiner has rejected those same claims under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), based on the contention that they are unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,995,263, issued to Tokuda et al (Tokuda '263) in view of Komoriya '284. The Examiner has, however, found Claims 6-7 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In response to the Examiner's comments, Applicant has amended the claims to better clarify the invention. Specifically, Claims 6 and 7 have been amended to place those claims in condition for allowance. Furthermore, Claim 15 has been amended, and Claim 16 added to further define the present invention. Finally, a number of the claims have been amended to correct for minor informalities. As amended above, the currently pending claims are not taught, disclosed or suggested by any prior art reference.

The Examiner previously stated that the prior art of record does not specifically teach an adjusting device for adjusting the axial position/inclination of the gas directing device to the optical element. Claims 15 and 16 have been amended to reflect that same function, with Claim 15 including an "adjusting device for changing the spatial position of the gas nozzle relative to the optical element," and Claim 16 including an "adjusting device for altering the location" of an impingement zone of the gas flow on the optical element. Thus, the amendment to Claim 15, and the additional Claim 16 are directed to the same allowable subject matter that was acknowledged by the Examiner in Claims 6 and 7.

Based on the above, Applicant submits that all of Claims 2-4, and 6-16 are now in condition for allowance. Therefore, reconsideration and passage to allowance is respectfully requested.

Should anything further be required, a telephone call to the undersigned, at (312) 226-1818, is respectfully invited.

Respectfully submitted,

FACTOR & PARTNERS, LLC

Jacob D. Koering
One of Attorneys for Applicant

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on November 17, 2003.

Jacob D. Koering